

HANOI DELAY SEEN ON REPLY TO U.S.

American Who Met Reds
Reports No Decision Yet

By HENRY TANNER

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Jan. 15—The Vietnamese Communists have not yet reached a decision on how to respond to the secret message sent to Hanoi by the United States two weeks ago, according to an American citizen who has been meeting with high-ranking North Vietnamese diplomats and Vietcong representatives here and in Algiers.

The American is Sanford Gottlieb, an official of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE).

He also reported here that he had been authorized by the Vietcong to announce a channel of communications through which American prisoners of war in Vietnam would be able to receive mail and parcels from their families in the United States.

Prisoner Exchange Hinted

He said it was his impression that the Vietcong would react favorably to a proposal for an exchange of American and Communist prisoners of war. If such a proposal were made by the United States either directly or through an intermediary.

Mr. Gottlieb has held private discussions during the last few days with the leading members of the Vietcong mission in Algiers and of the North Vietnamese trade delegation here.

The mission in Algiers, which except for that in Jakarta is the only Vietcong representa-

Committee of the National Liberation Front, the political arm of the Vietcong in South Vietnam.

The trade mission here is headed by Mai Van Bo, who in the absence of diplomatic relations between Paris and Hanoi, is acting as North Vietnam's unofficial ambassador.

Mr. Gottlieb said that the address through which mail and parcels could be sent to American prisoners in Vietnam would be made public in New York tomorrow night during a dinner given by SANE in honor of Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota.

There has been no such channel in the past since the Red Cross had no access to the prisoners and since there were no other contacts between Washington and Hanoi, he declared.

Silence Held No Rejection

Mr. Gottlieb said the principal point that seemed to emerge from his talks with the representatives of Hanoi and the Vietcong was that the Communists' two-week old silence did not amount to a rejection of the United States message.

He added that it was his impression that the message was still being analyzed and that various possible responses were being studied.

The United States message is believed to have been handed to a North Vietnamese diplomat by an American diplomat acting without intermediaries. The contact was made in one of the 22 capitals, including Paris, in which both Hanoi and Washington have missions.

The message is believed to have included a bid for clarification of the four-point plan cited by Premier Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam last April as a basis for possible negotiations.

Mr. Gottlieb said that following his talks he was convinced of two things:

¶That more time was needed to permit the North Vietnamese Communist leaders to discuss the United States peace offensive among themselves as well as with the Vietcong, with Moscow and with Peking.

¶That continuation of the pause in the American bombing of North Vietnam was essential.

Warning Against Bombing

"The day the first bomb drops on North Vietnam, the peace offensive is dead," he said. "After 10 months of bombing we must wait for months if necessary to give peace a chance."

One of the impressions he had gained, Mr. Gottlieb said, was that it was not until several days after United States bombers stopped attacking the North that the Vietnamese Communists began to take the pause seriously as part of a United States effort to explore the possibility of negotiation.

This impression is shared privately by French and other European diplomats who doubted the seriousness of the American diplomatic offensive at first but have since revised their



Associated Press

Sanford Gottlieb